

REMARKS


In the Office Action mailed September 9, 2003, the Examiner indicated that Claims 14, 15, and 18-32 are allowable. In order to facilitate allowance of these claims and without conceding the correctness of the Examiner's rejection of Claims 1-13, Claims 1-13 have been canceled. Applicants submit that Claims 14, 15, and 18-32 are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action mailed March 13, 2003, the Examiner states, at page 5, that the prior art cited by applicants has been considered. The Examiner did not, however, provide the applicants with signed and dated copies of the two Information Disclosure Statements (filed on May 10, 2001, and August 10, 2001) that disclose the prior art cited by the applicants at the time of mailing the first Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide us with signed and dated copies of the Information Disclosure Statements mailed May 10, 2001, and August 10, 2001, showing that the Examiner has considered each item of cited prior art.

In view of the foregoing claim amendments, applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact applicants' attorney at the telephone number below to discuss any issues that might be outstanding in connection with the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

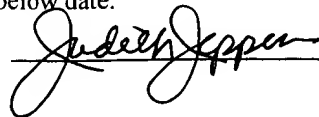
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the below date.

Date: 1/23/04

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